

Dear Co-Chair Doyle, Co-Chair Kissel, Co-Chair Tong, Vice Chair Winfield, Vice Chair McLachlan, Vice Chair Stafstrom, Ranking Member Rebimbas, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please accept this public hearing testimony in SUPPORT of HB 5469, An Act Concerning Bear Hunting.

Two bears were recently poached in a particularly gruesome way in Wilton, CT. The illegal hunter cut off one of the bear's head, feet and skin as trophies. This speaks to the demented mental state of the hunter as a member of our community and the pain and suffering he caused these bears. I believe the penalty for this cruel and illegal act should be higher.

This bill is a step in the right direction toward the needed protection of Connecticut's small bear population. Over the years, poaching penalties have been kept unacceptably weak (currently, poaching is only a Class C misdemeanor) by The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

DEEP has also been aggressively pursuing a bear trophy hunting agenda, **which I vigorously oppose.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Lynn Vaughan
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